

HON. MERVYN M. DYMALLY

Biography

A former California Assemblyman, State Senator, Lt. Governor and US Congressman, Mervyn M. Dymally has returned to where he began his political career in the State Assembly, representing South Los Angeles and the cities of Compton, Paramount and North Long Beach. Regarded as a senior member of the Legislature, Dymally was elected by his peers as Chairman of the Assembly Democratic Study Group, an organization committed to promoting progressive social and economic legislation.

Assemblyman Dymally earned a B.A. in Education from Los Angeles State College, M.A. in Government, California State University at Sacramento; and a Ph.D. from the United States International University at San Diego, California (now Alliant International University).

A teacher before entering the political arena, Dymally's career began with teaching handicapped children in the Los Angeles Unified School District. He was a lecturer at various universities, including posts at Central State University, Ohio and the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles.

Dr. Dymally is a native of Trinidad, British West Indies, and completed high school in his native land before going to work as a fledgling labor reporter for The Vanguard, a weekly newspaper published by the Oil Workers' Trade Union. At age 19, the Caribbean youth came to the United States to study journalism at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. After a cold winter, he traveled to sunny California to attend Chapman College and later transferred to Los Angeles State College.

While teaching he joined the Young Democrats and served as State Treasurer. In 1960 he was actively involved in the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. Later he was chosen Field Coordinator for the John F. Kennedy Campaign for President. Two years later he successfully ran for the State Assembly. In 1966, he became the first African American to serve in the State Senate and was soon elected as Chairman of the Senate Majority Caucus.

In 1974, he made history when he was elected the first of two African American Lieutenant Governors in the United States. Later, he was elected Congressman from South Los Angeles County, making him the first foreign-born Black to be elected as a Member of the US Congress. During this time he also served as Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa.

Dymally retired from Congress in 1992. Since then, he has traveled extensively including trips to Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean as a foreign affairs consultant. He currently serves as Honorary Consul to the Republic of Benin in West Africa and Chief Protocol Officer of the California Assembly. Married to former school teacher Alice Gueno, a native of New Orleans, Assemblyman Dymally is the father of a son, Mark, a daughter, Lynn and grandfather to Miya, Christian and Cameron.